

# **The Essential Services of Environmental Health Project**

# Purpose

To assist environmental health workers successfully incorporate the *Essential Services* into their daily practice.

The project aims to do this by developing a guidance document (training module) that can be used by local, state, and tribal organizations and academia.



# Funding

National Center for Environmental Health (NCEH), CDC, through a cooperative agreement with the Association of Schools of Public Health (ASPH)

# Project Area

Six Northwestern States:

- Alaska
- Washington
- Idaho
- Montana
- Wyoming
- Oregon

# Project Timeline

3 years, beginning October 1, 2001

## ■ Year 1:

- ✓ Essential Services Advisory Committee
- ✓ Training needs assessment
- ✓ Research
- ✓ Key informant interviews
- ✓ Select pilot sites
- ✓ Market the project

# Project Timeline

## ■ Year 2:

- ✓ Essential Services plan
- ✓ Pilot site training
- ✓ Essential Services Advisory Committee
- ✓ Case studies
- ✓ Market the project

## ■ Year 3:

- Final document (training module)
- Market and distribute the document

# Training Needs Questionnaire

- **Purpose:** To identify the knowledge and practice of the Essential Services by EH Specialists in the Northwest states
- **Conducted** June – August, 2002
- **179 responses** (4 job classes)
- **40 total questions**



# Examples of questions asked

- Our unit has a formal system in place to assess environmental health threats
- Our unit has the technical capacity to perform EH risk assessments
- Our unit has an EH advisory group
- Our unit has an up-to-date directory of referral sources
- Our unit has performance standards in place to measure our unit's performance

# Training Needs Questionnaire

## Results:

- Less than 50% of EHS knew about the Essential Services
- ES performed most frequently:
  - Enforcing rules and regulations
  - Developing a competent workforce
- ES performed least frequently:
  - Monitoring health status
  - Evaluating effectiveness
  - Mobilizing partnerships

# Pilot Sites

- Office of EH and Safety, Boise State Univ.  
Boise, ID (3 EHS)
- Benton County Health Department. Corvallis,  
OR (6 EHS)
- Gallatin City/County Health Department.  
Bozeman, MT (11 EHS)
- Thurston County Health Department. Olympia,  
WA (45 EHS)

# What the pilot sites said

- The ES can be used to evaluate existing programs
- The ES makes good “business sense”
- The ES is a good communication tool to educate non-public health policy makers
- Management needs to fully understand the ES to support ES integration
- ES works good with an advisory committee (helps to educate them)

# What the pilot sites said

- People need time to learn how to create performance indicators
- Use ES as a topic for staff meetings (to help staff clarify unit's vision and to discuss roles and responsibilities)
- Ensure staff buy-in before going external
- Get outside help whenever possible
- Use with change management process
- Use training as a means to develop leadership

# What the pilot sites said

- Show successful examples of ES in practice
- Is useful for helping to conduct Community EH Assessments (e.g., PACE-EH, APEXPH)
- Need to use clear, understandable terms to describe the ES
- Very effective in identifying gaps in the system
- Good tool to use as a part of a strategic planning process

# The Training Module

- CD ROM format
- Ready for distribution: July, 2004
- Train the trainer's module
- Introduction to Essential Services
- Workshop activities
  - Group exercises
  - Case studies
  - Writing performance measures